

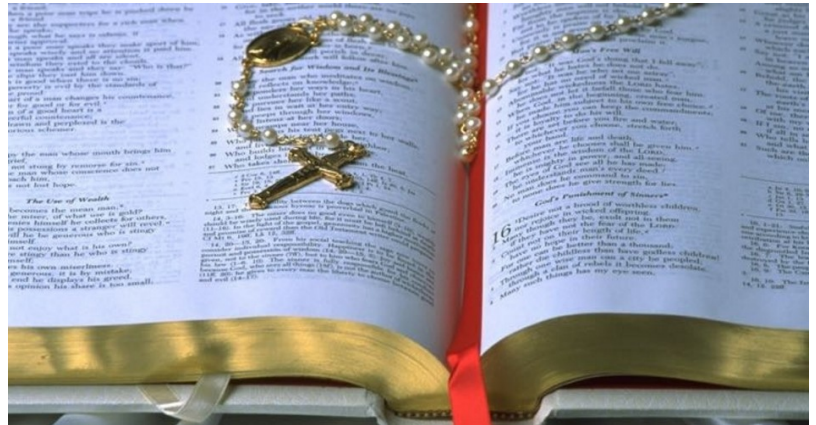


Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on September 11, 2018

## Communist China Cracks Down on Christianity

Proving once more that communism demands total loyalty to the state, the Chinese government is engaged in an extensive crackdown on religion, especially Christianity, by shuttering unapproved churches, burning Bibles, and restricting what can be posted on religious websites.

While Christianity is generally in decline in the West, it is growing rapidly in China. According to the [Associated Press](#), “China has an estimated 38 million Protestants, and experts have predicted that the country will have the world’s largest Christian population in a few decades.”



Since the Christian faith requires believers to serve God rather than the state — particularly a tyrannical, atheistic one — this creates quite a problem for Beijing, which has long tolerated a large network of underground churches despite laws requiring people to worship only in churches that have registered with the government.

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Over the last several years, the communist government of President Xi Jinping has been tightening its grip on religion. In February, the government issued new regulations that included harsher punishments for unregistered churches.

“In July, more than 30 of Beijing’s hundreds of underground Protestant churches took the rare step of releasing a joint statement complaining of ‘unceasing interference’ and the ‘assault and obstruction’ of regular activities of believers since the new regulations came into effect,” reported [Al Jazeera](#).

The most significant crackdown yet occurred this past weekend, wrote the AP:

In Beijing, the Zion church was shut on Sunday by around 60 government workers who arrived at 4:30 p.m. accompanied by buses, police cars and fire trucks, the church’s pastor, Ezra Jin Mingri, said Monday. Zion is known as the largest house church in Beijing, with six branches.

The officials declared the gatherings illegal and sealed off church properties, Jin said, after already freezing the pastor’s personal assets in an apparent attempt to force him to comply with their demands.

The district religious affairs bureau gave worshippers notices that they must attend state-sanctioned churches along with a list of such churches.

It’s not hard to figure out why the government took these steps. The church “rejected requests from authorities to install closed-circuit television cameras in the building” in April, noted Al Jazeera, and without some way to verify that the congregation isn’t hearing “subversive” messages — for instance, “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29) — the Communist Party wasn’t about to let the church go on its merry way.



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Likewise, a church in the city of Nanyang was raided September 5, its pastor told the AP, claiming crosses, Bibles, and furniture were burned during the raid. The pastor “said the church had been in discussions with local authorities who demanded it ‘reform’ itself, but no agreement had been reached or official documents released.”

Bob Fu of U.S.-based China Aid told the AP that the church closures represent a “significant escalation” of the government’s war on Christianity. According to the news service, “Fu also provided video footage of what appeared to be piles of burning Bibles and forms stating that the signatories had renounced their Christian faith.”

“The international community should be alarmed and outraged for this blatant violation of freedom of religion and belief,” he wrote in an e-mail to the AP.

On top of all that, Beijing is now trying to force all religious websites to register with the government and severely limiting what they can post, reported [Reuters](#), citing the state-run *Global Times*.

A new policy document issued Monday requires all organizations that disseminate religious information on the Internet to apply for licenses. The licenses allow them to “preach and offer religious training” on their websites but not to livestream religious activities or post on any other websites, penned Reuters. In addition, “the guidelines also specifically prohibit online religious services from inciting subversion, opposing the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and promoting extremism and separatism.”

Clearly the communists are concerned that too many Chinese will come to the same conclusion that, according to Al Jazeera, Zion pastor Jin has: “On this land, the only one we can trust in is God.”

But will they succeed in stamping out Christianity? Jin thinks not. “Churches will continue to develop,” he told the AP. “Blocking the sites will only intensify conflicts.”

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